

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

W.A. Brown & Son, Inc.

North Carolina Manufacturing Extension Partnership

W.A. Brown & Son Reaps Savings with Lean

Client Profile:

W.A. Brown and Son, founded in 1910, manufactures commercial grade walk-in coolers and freezers. The company expanded its business with the development of energy efficient Structural Insulated Panels (SIP) walls for any building. W.A. Brown employs 150 people at its facility in Salisbury, North Carolina.

Situation:

W.A. Brown's goal was to become more competitive in the marketplace by finding internal savings without compromising the expectations of their customers. The company contacted the North Carolina Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NCMEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for help.

Solution:

NCMEP conducted a series of Lean workshops which consisted of Lean 100 with Factory Simulation, Value Stream Mapping, and a 4-day Kaizen. As a result of NCMEP's assistance, W.A. Brown has created a lean enterprise that involved employees early on in the process to gain their support and understanding of lean manufacturing. The NCMEP Lean training taught employees basic principles of identifying and eliminating waste in the manufacturing process. Implementation assistance provided by NCMEP contributed to waste elimination for the purposes of reduction in lead-time to customers, lowering manufacturing costs and increasing quality. The improved layout has also resulted in fewer on-the-job accidents.

Results:

- * Projected sales of \$2.5 million.
- * Estimated savings of \$600,000.
- * Reduced work in process from 16 days to 2 days.
- * Reduced movement within plant by 5,000 feet.
- * Reduced product handling by 30 percent.
- * Increased floor space.

Testimonial:

"The employees took hold of Lean and now generate ideas."

Randy Hoffner, Manufacturing Manager